



**Submission to Senate Inquiry: The framework surrounding the
prevention, investigation and prosecution of industrial deaths in
Australia**

June 2018

Introduction

OzHelp is a national mental health and suicide prevention organisation, established in 2001. Our primary goal is to prevent workplace-related suicides by creating healthy and engaged industrial workplaces across Australia. We provide mental and physical health screenings, assessments and recommendations to help and empower industrial personnel to live healthier and happier lives. Our belief is that once access to these health services is enabled, workers will be empowered to seek holistic health support for themselves and their colleagues.

Terms of reference

d. Safety implications relating to the increased use of temporary and labour hire workers;

Our key findings highlight that industrial workers are twice as likely to die from suicide than a workplace accident. This is a key area of OzHelp's work – we focus on industrial suicide prevention. Industrial suicides have significant and long-lasting negative impacts on families and friends, as well as workplace morale – the mental health of other personnel is often affected.

Mental health support is important to not only create positive wellbeing for employees, but also to raise workplace morale, lower absenteeism and increase productivity. A healthy and positive workplace is more likely to be aware and alert of physical dangers that can occur and is a preventative measure to workplace-related incidents.

Recommendation: Implement National standards as a guideline for workplaces to provide mental health support to personnel.

e. the role of employers and unions in creating a safe-work culture;

One of the key findings associated with workplace-related deaths and suicide is employees having limited access to support. It goes without saying that if personnel do not have access to support and education, they will not receive the help they need to ensure their health and wellbeing. Often, we find that support is isolated to one key group, whether it be employers, trade unions or external health providers. The reality is that support has to be created across a range of stakeholders – both internal and external. OzHelp has found that most workers without prior training and knowledge about workplace health, will not seek help when it is most needed. Additionally, we have found that employees with various support networks and outlets have a higher and more positive self-reported health rating for both their workplaces and themselves.

Ultimately, workers need to be empowered to seek the health support they need. Our services focus on delivering programs, support and guidance to workers. It is imperative that personnel can recognise when they need to seek help, but also when they need to provide support to others around them. Once workers have received

health and wellbeing training, they are likely to recognise the need for and provide support when colleagues, friends and family are experiencing health issues – creating a positive domino effect both in and out of the workplace for people’s mental health and wellbeing.

OzHelp’s online education tools help industrial workers recognise when to take action and seek help and support. Once workers understand health on a holistic level they will understand the importance of seeking help, not only for themselves but also others, be they colleagues, families or friends – as well as the repercussions of not seeking help.

Recommendation: Establish a national industrial health screening support and training framework to engage workers about physical and mental health and where to seek support.

Workplace Tune Up – One of OzHelp’s initiatives that increase access for health screening, support and training.

